

Kommers, Theodore F. "Increased Press Access to Information--Limiting the Range of Government Classification." *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics and Public Policy* 6, no. 1 (1992): 217. The author suggests that limitations on the free flow of information and abuses of the classification process jeopardize democracy. Only that which is classified as a danger to national security should be withheld from the public.

Le Duc, Don R. "Recognizing the Interests of the Public in Broadcast Programming." *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics and Public Policy* 6, no. 1 (1992): 75. Network TV lost millions of dollars in the late 1980s because citizen support groups threatened to boycott products advertised on controversial programming, causing sponsors to pull out. The author speculates on this trend and possible regulation as a major technological revolution looms in the near future.

Lichtenberg, Judith--Editor. *Democracy and the Mass Media*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990. This book is part of a series on philosophy and public policy and includes research on the values and concepts that underlie public policy. This volume came out of discussions on news, the mass media, and democratic values. The collection contains such relevant essays as "Four Criticisms of Press Ethics" and "Mass Communications Policy: Where We Are and Where We Should Be Going." The essays look at whether the regulation of the press is justified. Alternatives to government regulation, such as ethics codes and press councils, are also discussed.

Middleton, Kent R., and Bill F. Chamberlin. *The Law of Public Communication*. New York: Longman, 3rd edition, 1994. This volume updates the textbook with the same title. This edition includes court cases, legislation, and administrative decisions affecting the law of public communication since the summer of 1987. Some of the more pertinent developments are found in chapter 12 on the electronic media.

Powe, Lucas A., Jr. *American Broadcasting and the First Amendment*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1987. The author explains how broadcasting has been separated from the print tradition of almost complete freedom and explores the consequences of that separation. He explores the question of abuses in broadcasting

regulation and argues that when a society licenses its press, such a system encourages problems like favoritism and attempted censorship by the political party in power. Abuses, he writes, are inevitable when there are licenses and supervision of licensees.

## News/Reporting

Dayan, Daniel, and Elihu Katz. *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994, paperback edition (1992 copyright). Eloquent and profound examination of special form of broadcast content the authors call "media events." Authors review the impact not just on a nation but on the world of a dozen live broadcasts. The sample includes the funerals of President Kennedy and Lord Louis Mountbatten, the royal wedding of Charles and Diana, the journeys of Pope John Paul II and Anwar al-Sadat, the 1960 debates between John Kennedy and Richard Nixon, the Watergate hearings, the revolutionary changes of 1989 in Eastern Europe, the Olympics, etc. Chapter 7, "Reviewing Media Events," presents several arguments or claims regarding the impact of media events on the sponsors of public ceremonies, on journalists and media institutions, on viewers and political institutions, etc. This book would be most useful as a guide for defining the publics and effects of public broadcasting. It is a powerful book that indirectly helps the reader understand why there are so many stakeholders in public broadcasting.

Donovan, Robert J., and Ray Scherer. *Unsilent Revolution: Television News and American Public Life, 1948-1991*. New York, N.Y., and Cambridge, England: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Cambridge University Press, 1992. This book has two parts, the first of which describes particular episodes when television news changed the course of events and built or destroyed the careers of public figures, such as the civil rights struggles in the South, the manned space program, the assassination and funeral of President John F. Kennedy, and the riots of 1965. Each of the 12 episodes highlights how television news has changed the social and political fabric of America. Part II describes how television news has affected and will continue to affect four areas of politics: the presidency, diplomacy and

terrorism, Congress, and presidential campaigning. It also explains and analyzes the competition between print journalism and broadcast journalism and concludes with television's impact on four dramatic stories of 1989-1991: Tiananmen Square, the Berlin Wall, the Persian Gulf War, and the failed Russian coup.

Keirstead, Phillip O. *Journalist's Notebook of Live Radio-TV News*. Blue Ridge Summit, Pa.: Tab Books, 1976. This book explains the basics of modern radio-television journalism and instructs, using the traditional values and techniques against a setting of steady technological change. The broadcast journalist can never lose track of the fact that he or she is directly involved in the technology of getting a story and producing it in its final audiovisual form. All this must be done against the constant urging of that demanding taskmaster, time. This is a good overview of responsibilities of journalists and stations, including ethics, ground rules for editorializing, and law.

Leroy, David J., and Christopher H. Sterling. *Mass News: Practices, Controversies and Alternatives*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973. The authors introduce the reader to the three major sources of news--the wire services, newspapers, and television. The focus of this four-part collection of different articles is on an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of what the authors call the mass news media. The first section deals with the context of mass news and gives the reader background in crucial ideas that shape thinking about news and society. Part two, "Practices of the Mass News," explores the operating practices of mass news media, concentrating on news economics and technology. "Controversies in Mass News" in part three deals with "The Black Reporter and His Problems" and "Subpoenas: Should Reporters Be Forced To Tell What They Know?" "Alternatives in Mass News" makes up the fourth section, and "Press Councils: A Brief Review" looks at the groups of people who evaluate the performance of the press in a given community.

Smith, Conrad. *Media and Apocalypses: News Coverage of the Yellowstone Forest Fires, Exxon Valdez Oil Spill and Loma Prieta Earthquake*. Westport, Conn., and London: Greenwood Press, 1992. This critical study of how American

television and print journalists covered three catastrophes focuses on the processes by which journalists identified news sources and gathered data, on the professional values that shaped those processes, and on the ways in which those values contributed to or interfered with accurate and comprehensive reporting. The book has three sections. The first two chapters describe catastrophe journalism and summarize the scholarly literature about how news is gathered. The next three chapters examine in detail how the catastrophes were reported by the local newspaper, the "elite press," and the three commercial television networks. The final two chapters describe the results of research and make suggestions for changes in the way journalists gather information about catastrophes and other unanticipated events.

Strentz, Herbert. *News Reporters and News Sources: Accomplices in Shaping and Misshaping the News*. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1989. The author writes that the news that reaches the audience depends on the competence of the reporter and the nature of the reporter's relationship with the news source. The influence and power of news is discussed along with possible pitfalls. For example, different persons see the same event or issue in different ways. The author also writes about important points of interviewing, protecting news sources, and the distinction between conventional and nonconventional news sources.

Walters, Lynne Masel, Lee Wilkins, and Tim Walters. *Bad Tidings: Communication and Catastrophe*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1989. The editors provide a sampling of the most recent empirical work on the mass media and disasters, from content analysis of media reports to studies of audience response to those events. The aim of the book is to help readers develop an integrated understanding of communication and catastrophe. Articles include "Preventive Journalism and AIDS Editorial: Dilemmas for Private and Public Health" and "The Hostage Taker, the Terrorist, the Media: Partners in Public Crime."

### Bias/Objectivity/ Conflict of Interest

Auchmuty, Jim. "Unscripted Departure." *Quill* 81, no. 9 (November/December 1993): 15-17. This article describes how an Atlanta journalist dealt with a sensational murder case by preparing a movie treatment about the case and sending it to producers. That act got him fired from his television station on the grounds of conflict of interest. The journalist has sued the station. Interestingly, producers now want to do a movie about him.

Hays, Robert G. "Event Orientation and Objectivity as Ethical Issues in Media Coverage of Agriculture and the Environment." *Agriculture and Human Values* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 60. Journalists frequently lack a comprehensive knowledge of agriculture and environmental issues, which places limitations on their objectivity. Therefore, they need to be more wary when reporting on staged events such as Earth Day.

"Here Now the News." *National Review* 44, no. 22 (Nov. 16, 1992): 47. This article suggests that major media coverage of the 1992 presidential campaign was decidedly biased in favor of Clinton and the Democratic Party. Bias, media luminaries claim, is in the eye of the beholder.

Hynds, Pat. "Balancing Bias in the News." *Media & Values*, no. 59/60 (Fall 1992): 15. This international perspective provides a new slant on bias. A detection guide is included.

Manly, Lorne. "Without Bias?" *Folio* 22, no. 18 (Oct. 15, 1993): 57. Joseph Goulden, a director of Accuracy in Media, discusses why the right wing is keeping such close tabs on what the media are doing.

Miraldi, Robert. *Muckraking and Objectivity: Journalism's Colliding Traditions*. New York, N.Y., Westport, Conn., and London: Greenwood Press, 1990. From Lincoln Steffens in 1902 to Seymour Hersh in 1988, muckraking journalism has been on the cutting edge of liberalism and reform, a force with both wonderful potential and clear limits. The author focuses on muckraking journalism by raising basic questions about the role and function of the press in America. The point of view of muckraking--an adversarial, critical, outsider's

point of view--is far afield from the one that dominates the conventional press--that is, the objective or neutral point of view.

### Politics and Public Affairs

Denton, Robert E., editor. *Ethical Dimensions of Political Communication*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1991. Several authors write about ethical issues of political culture, campaigns, media, advertising, ghostwriting, discourse, politicians, and new technologies. An underlying theme is that only citizens are truly capable of real or perceived problems of ethics in political communication.

"Forum of the Future." *Broadcasting* 122, no. 27 (June 29, 1992): 19. This article suggests Ross Perot's town meeting could allow him to actually become a controller while wearing the mask of a populist.

Gurevitch, Michael, and Anandam P. Kavoori. "Television Spectacles as Politics." *Communication Monographs* 59, no. 4 (Dec. 1, 1992): 415. In the age of an increasingly fragmented society, the television spectacle encourages discussion, provides society with symbols to associate with particular issues, and creates a dynamic between popular and formal discourse through creating a unified mass audience.

Iyengar, Shanto. *Is Anyone Responsible: How Television Frames Political Issues*. Chicago, Ill., and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991. In public affairs, the impact of television has been widely condemned. As the dominant form of mass communication, television is said to have contributed to a variety of maladies, including reduced voter turnout and the decline of the political parties. But the only area of political life in which the impact of television has been empirically established is public opinion. This book extends the analysis of television's impact on public opinion to the important questions of political responsibility and accountability.

Murphy, David. *The Silent Watchdog: The Press in Local Politics*. London: Constable, 1976. The author contends that much information about the government is not revealed by the press because of perceptions of events by journalists and

because of legal constraints. Case studies illustrate how governments cover up and the kind of pressures that inhibit journalists from investigating. While this book is about the newspapers of Great Britain, it has many good points about the variety of factors that can lead to bland and superficial journalism. The book also discusses the contradiction of the term "free press"--Is it a free exchange of ideas or is it a capitalist industry which sells its goods in competition with others?

Routt, Edd. *Dimensions of Broadcast Editorializing*. Blue Ridge Summit, Pa.: Tab Books, 1974. The author thinks that editorializing has a place in broadcasting and predicted two decades ago that there would be more editorializing as the industry matured. He writes that the role of the editorial in the newsroom would soon be an integral one. He examines the origins and background of the broadcast editorial and the considerations involved in editorializing and gives examples of how stations were editorializing at the time the book was written.

Sabato, Larry J. *Feeding Frenzy: How Attack Journalism Has Transformed American Politics*. New York: The Free Press, 1991. Sabato attacks the "attack journalists" with the same savvy with which they treat their many targets so extensively addressed in this book. Every major political scandal of the 1980s is outlined in a case-by-case approach to media influence.

Television Information Office. *Voices and Values: Television Stations in the Community*. New York, N.Y.: Television Information Office, 1984. The authors believe that American television is based on the concept of service to the local community. The book provides for the general reader a sampling of the kinds of programs and related activities that individual stations have created to serve the special needs of their communities. It also provides to television broadcasters a reservoir of ideas from which to draw inspiration for their own community-related projects.

### Public Broadcasting

Akhavan-Majid, R. "Public Service Broadcast System; A Manifestation of Presidential Authoritarianism." *Gazette: International Journal for Mass Communication* 50, no. 1

(1992): 21. In a time of global decline in public broadcasting, Japan's N.H.K. has succeeded in adapting new technologies to its own advantage and has grown in power and prominence since the early 1980s.

Avery, Robert K., Editor. *Public Service Broadcasting in a Multichannel Environment: The History and Survival of an Ideal*. New York and London: Longman Publishing Group, 1993. This book is a collection of articles meant to serve as a starting point from which to understand the problems and purposes of public service broadcasting. The authors responded to specific research questions, such as "What are the most significant problems facing public service broadcasting the 1990s?" and "What solutions are being proposed?" The articles include studies of public broadcasting systems worldwide, including Britain, Germany, and France. Each article discusses the contemporary challenges and policy decisionmaking in each public broadcasting entity.

Carragee, Kevin, David Croteau, and William Hoynes. *Public Television Prime Time: Public Affairs Programming, Political Diversity, and the Conservative Critique of Public Television*. New York: FAIR, 1993. This study examines three questions about programming on PBS stations. The authors take a look at what kind of programming public television offers to evening viewers, whose views are included in public television public affairs programs, and how public television addresses some major contemporary issues. The authors found that the programming on public television that provoked much political debate is only a small percentage of the primetime programming offered by PBS stations. Their findings also show that public television draws upon a narrow range of sources and that regular citizens and public interest activists form only a small percentage of sources. This study shows that sources of documentaries have the broadest diversity.

"CPB Funding Debate." *Broadcasting* 122, no. 1 (March 1992): 36. The alleged liberal bias of PBS programming created a heated debate on the Senate floor, as funding debates for CPB continue.

Dinges, John, and Marcus D. Rosenbaum, Editors. *Sound Reporting: The National Public Radio Guide to Radio Journalism and Production*.



Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall-Hunt, 1992. As a general guide, this publication deals with questions that arise most often at National Public Radio but which apply as well to public radio and television stations. There are situations unique to NPR, such as the policy for accepting project grants and whether an NPR journalist should make speeches. Ethical issues that arise in any newsroom are also tackled.

Horowitz, David. *The Problem with Public TV*. Washington, D.C.: The Center for the Study of Popular Culture, 1993. The author writes that PBS's "self-destructive" tilt to the left comes more from bad conscience than bad judgment. PBS is becoming increasingly commercial in its search for funds; in doing so, Horowitz says it is becoming indistinguishable from commercial TV and that programming on cable channels like A&E, Bravo, and C-SPAN is comparable to anything that PBS can offer. He concludes by asking why public television cannot be self-supporting.

Jarvik, Laurence. "Making Public Television Public." *The Heritage Foundation Background*, no. 873 (January 1992): 1-12. The author's thesis is that public television should be sold to the private sector. Among reasons public television has outlived its usefulness he includes competition from cable and CPB's resistance to audits of its programs. Jarvik claims that a small group of public television insiders reaps huge financial rewards from the sale of videocassettes, licensing of characters, and commercial sponsorship. He points to privatization of public television in countries like Britain and the Netherlands as success stories.

"NPR: Holding On." *Broadcasting* 120, no. 19 (May 13, 1991): 53. As community support for public radio increases, state governments' budgets are becoming less accommodating to broadcasters' financial needs.

Prosser, Tony. "Public Service Broadcasting and Deregulation in the U.K." *European Journal of Communication* 7, no. 2 (June 1, 1992): 173. The author suggests a breakdown in broadcast regulation in the U.K., principally because neither a market-based system nor a clear concept of public service broadcasting has been developed.

"U.S. Taxpayers Should Not Be Forced to Bankroll Public Broadcasting and Its Left-Wing Bias." *The New American* 8, no. 20 (Oct. 5, 1992): 15. Public broadcasting is too liberal and should become self-supporting, relieving taxpayers of an unnecessary burden.

## Homosexuality

Gessen, Masha. "Journalism's Hidden Agenda." *Outlook*, no. 17 (Summer 1992): 27. An *Advocate* editor warns the lesbian and gay press about the dangers of objectivity.

Kasindorf, Jeanie Russell. "Lesbian Chic." *New York* 26, no. 19 (May 10, 1993): 30. From K.D. Lang to Martina Navratilova, women who love women are crushing stereotypes. The author says they are stylish, political, and proud.

## Minorities

Gist, Marilyn E. "Minorities in Media Imagery: A Social Cognitive Perspective on Journalistic Bias." *Newspaper Research Journal* 11, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 52. The author presents psychological perspective on the effects of media images on members of society and on society at large with regard to the lack of minorities in the newsrooms and on the pages of newspapers.

Windausen, Rodolfo A. "Good Guys and Bad Guys." *Hispanic* (Jan. 1, 1991): 14. Although progress had been made, negative stereotypes of Hispanics will prevail in media. Also, a look at how major magazines covered Hispanic Heritage Month.

## Women

Davis, Donald M. "Portrayals of Women in Prime-Time Network Television: Some Demographic Characteristics." *Sex Roles* 23, no. 5/6 (Sept. 1, 1990): 325. Few changes have occurred in the portrayal of women in television from the 1970s to the 1980s. Men still outnumber women two to one, and the television female's existence is still largely a function of her youth and beauty.

Rivers, Caryl. "Bandwagons, Women and Cultural Mythology." *Media Studies Journal* 7, no. 1/2 (Winter 1993): 1. The author, a Boston

University journalism professor, believes that old myths about female unreliability still exist in the media. She writes, "Too often today, the American media look like a fun-house mirror, reflecting back images of women that are distorted and grotesque."

Signorielli, Nancy. "Television and Conceptions About Sex Roles: Maintaining Conventionality and the Status Quo." *Sex Roles* 21, no. 5/6 (Sept. 1, 1989): 341. With few exceptions, the image of women from 1972-1989 on television has been stable, traditional, and supportive of the status quo, despite the many changes in society during this period. The author fears this may be contributing to ambivalent views about women's roles in society.

Ward, Jean. "Talking (Fairly) About the World--A Reprise on Journalistic Language." *Media Studies Journal* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 183. Only the most routine and obvious offenses of sexism have been eliminated from the news media. Even in 1993, media language regularly stereotypes women.

### Sex

Sapolsky, Barry S., and Joseph O. Tarberlet. "Sex in Primetime Television: 1979 vs. 1989." *Journal of Broadcast and Electronic Media* 35, no. 4 (Fall 1991): 505. A content analysis found that sexual behavior and language on television had not diminished over the 10-year period. Safe sex, STDs, and contraception were rarely addressed, and sex occurred mostly among the unmarried.

"Sex on TV '93." *TV Guide* 41, no. 33 (Aug. 14, 1993): 8. Is that scene romantic, or is it just racy? Producers, writers, and actors wrestle with ever-changing standards of what's acceptable on television.

### Violence/Crime

"At Issue: Should the Television Industry Do More to Curb Depictions of Violence?" *The CQ Researcher* 3, no. 12 (March 26, 1993): 181. A University of Michigan psychology professor and the president of the Writers' Guild of America present opposing views on curbing violence on television.

Lotz, Roy Edward. *Crime and the American Press*. New York, N.Y.: Westport, Conn., and London: Praeger, 1991. One of a series that takes a look at the power, influence, and importance of the press, this book focuses on why crime-related stories comprise the single largest news reporting category of newspapers in America. By considering whether or not crime stories deserve the amount and prominence of coverage in the media, Lotz tackles many related issues that lie at the very core of the nature and function of the press in America. He reviews the historical, philosophical, theoretical, and pragmatic dimensions of crime stories in the press and argues that the press coverage of crime reporting has improved over the years.

"Television: Fretting Over Violence." *Time* 142, no. 5 (Aug. 2, 1993): 52. Public outcry and congressional hearings have prompted network television to attach a warning label to shows containing violence. Many shows with violence are being toned down or dropped to avoid the label.

## Appendix B

### Survey Report on Station Standards

As part of the Standards of Editorial Integrity and Responsibility project for CPB, the University of South Carolina conducted telephone interviews with general managers (or their designees) at 230 randomly selected public radio or television stations. Of these, 145 were radio stations, 65 were television stations, and 20 were cases in which the person interviewed was responsible for both a television and a radio station. All of the telephone calls were placed during the weeks of Nov. 8 and 15, 1993. The issues discussed were current at that time.

#### Standards of Integrity

The first question in this survey was whether the station had in place some type of code of ethics or standards of integrity. Overall, 59 percent of the stations surveyed reported having such a code or guidelines in place. As shown in F. 1, 54 percent of radio stations and 65 percent of television stations had such a code. Those stations that had codes or guidelines were asked a series of questions concerning how these codes were developed, how they are used, and how employees learn about these guidelines, while those that indicated they did not have a code were asked about the process they use in making programming decisions.

#### Stations with Guidelines

Those stations that had a code or standard in place use a variety of means in developing these guidelines. The most frequently mentioned factor in developing these guidelines was that it was based on the station's mission statement, so that stations rely on their general philosophy in developing codes of ethics. In addition to their mission statements, stations rely on a number of external sources in developing ethical codes. Several stations reported that their code was based on the codes of other

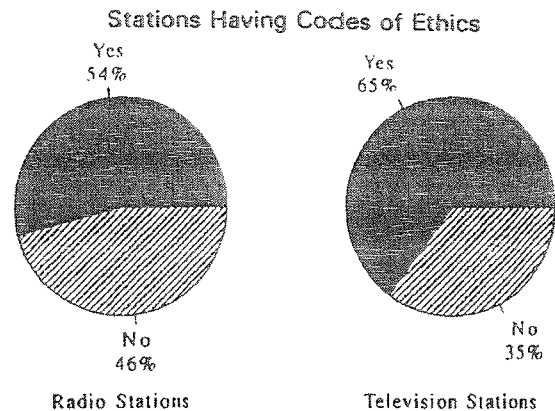


Figure 1

stations. Other sources, including the CPB Code of Ethics, SECA guidelines, PBS guidelines, NPR's Standard Reporting Manual, guidelines of the Society of Professional Journalists, and the Wingspread Project were each mentioned by several stations as the source for their code of ethics. Other sources for such codes were Federal Communications Commission regulations, state laws, and university regulations.

The process that is used in developing such guidelines is not uniform across stations. The most frequent method is for management to develop the guidelines, although there is often staff input into the process. At other stations, codes of ethics are developed by the board of directors or by a community advisory board. Another common method for arriving at such standards is to develop them through practice over time. Several stations reported that they have a code of ethics but that it is an unwritten or informal set of guidelines.

Those stations that have programming guidelines tend to make use of these guidelines in making programming decisions. Approximately 56 percent reported using these guidelines in every programming decision and an additional 28 percent indicated these guidelines were used for most programming decisions. About 15 percent of these stations made use of these guidelines in making only some or a few of their programming decisions.

Related to the issue of guidelines is the process that stations use in deciding whether or not to air a program from outside sources. Responses to this question were generally of two types: the

substantive considerations involved in such decisions and the process by which such decisions were made.

In general, the most frequently mentioned consideration was whether the program was of interest or value to the station's audience. A similar concern was whether the program added to the station's quality or was felt to be a good use of the station's time and resources. Previous experience with the external source was also an important factor, particularly for programs from either NPR or PBS. If stations were familiar with and satisfied with previous works from an outside source, they were more likely to air them.

A number of stations indicated that they depended on the judgment of the networks. Programs provided by NPR or PBS were generally accepted by stations, with several respondents indicating that they depended on the networks to "red flag" potentially controversial material.

Other considerations mentioned included whether or not the program was consistent with the station's general policies and standards, whether it was consistent with community standards, and whether it provided balance to the station's programming. The process by which decisions are made about airing a program from an outside source also varied across stations. The most frequent method reported was for the program director to review the material, although a number of stations indicated that such decisions were made by the station manager or based upon a more general staff review. In a small number of cases, external material is reviewed by a management committee or by the board of directors.

Stations also use a variety of means for making those involved in the decisions about airing programs from outside sources aware of the guidelines. In most cases, employees are given a copy of the guidelines or a policy manual or are provided with a copy of the mission statement in which these procedures are described. A number of stations have an orientation program in which this information is provided, while others inform employees directly through the general manager. Other ways in which employees are made aware of these guidelines include staff meetings, daily experience, and employee involvement in developing and writing these guidelines.

In those cases where a program may be controversial, it is generally the responsibility of the

station manager to apply these guidelines in deciding whether or not to air the program. In a somewhat smaller percentage of cases, this responsibility is handled by the program director, while in a few cases it is the responsibility of others, such as the news director, the vice president for broadcasting, a Community Advisory Board, or a program committee.

Overall, about 60 percent of public broadcasting radio and television stations have in place some code of ethics or standards of integrity, with television stations slightly more likely than radio stations to have such a code. The way in which stations develop such codes is not uniform. Where such standards exist they are commonly based on the station's mission statement or on some other professional code of ethics or guidelines. Codes of ethics are most frequently developed by management, though this process often involves staff input. Other sources of such standards include development by the board of directors, community advisory boards, or establishment through practice over time.

### Stations without Guidelines

Public radio and television stations that do not have a code of ethics or standards of integrity must still make decisions about programming and about whether or not to air programs from outside sources. When respondents from these stations were asked how programming decisions were made, most of them answered in terms of the person responsible for making this decision. Responsibility for this decision seems to rest primarily with either the program director or the general manager, with a slightly higher number of stations indicating that such decisions were the responsibility of the program director. A small number of stations reported that program decisions were made by the news director, the vice president for broadcasting, the board of directors, or a program committee, while several stations indicated that this was a staff decision. The program's importance to the community, its compatibility with the mission statement, and viewer response to similar programs were also cited as factors in how decisions about programming are made. When asked specifically whether such decisions were made by one person or by a group or committee, about 60 percent of these stations reported that one person was responsible, while 40 percent indicated that such decisions were made by a group or committee.



The types of responses that stations without codes of ethics or standards of integrity gave to the question concerning how the station made decisions to air programs from outside sources were similar to those provided by stations with such codes, although the emphasis was somewhat different. More stations without codes cited an outside program's consistency with the mission statement or general philosophy of the station as a factor in such decisions and these stations also seemed more likely to consider whether the program added to the quality of the station's programming and was a good use of resources.

As with stations that had a code of ethics in place, the decision process in these situations for stations without such standards tended to rest with either the program director or the station manager, with other individuals or committees having this responsibility in a small number of cases.

### Controversy

A question of particular interest in this study was how public radio and television stations deal with controversy or potentially controversial issues. Respondents were asked if their station had aired any programs that had caused controversy in their community in the past three years.

As demonstrated in F. 2, 73 percent of television stations and 57 percent of radio stations reported "having aired a program that caused controversy."

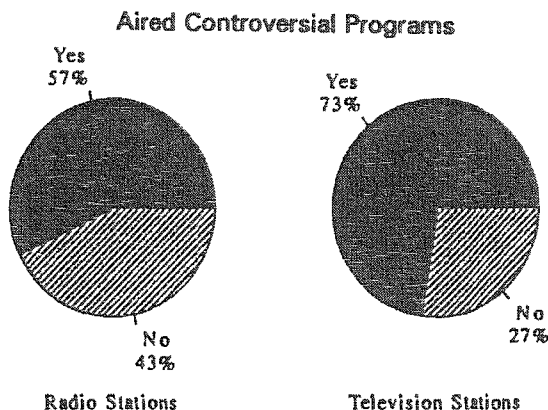


Figure 2

As might be expected, a wide variety of programs were cited as controversial, ranging from daily network programs to one-time programs on local issues, and the types of complaints differed between television and radio. The one program cited most often was *Tongues Untied*, which was described by several respondents as a program about black homosexuals who were HIV positive. On one hand, complaints about this program were received from those who objected to its content and disapproved of airing the show. On the other, several stations that chose not to air the show received complaints about censorship on this issue. Other specific programs which several stations reported as causing controversy in their community included *Lost Language of Cranes* and *Portrait of a Marriage*.

While controversies ranged across a broad spectrum of issues, the topic that was most likely to cause controversy was gay and lesbian issues. In addition to *Tongues Untied*, the general topic of homosexuality or gay and lesbian issues was frequently cited as the subject of controversial programming.

Another situation that a number of stations reported as causing controversy when it aired was the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings. A perceived liberal bias or a lack of balance in presenting this issue were the most frequently cited complaints.

A number of stations reported that their coverage of issues involving Israel and the Middle East have caused controversy in their communities and reporting on the Gulf War sparked disputes in several areas.

General issues of race and particular programs concerning individuals such as Louis Farrakhan and Malcolm X have been sources of controversy in a number of communities, while religious topics, including a program on Creationism vs. Darwinism and an *Austin City Limits* program, which was perceived to be denigrating to Jesus Christ, raised concerns in others.

Abortion, sexual issues, and nudity were controversial subjects reported by several stations. A number of political issues were also cited as controversial, including reporting on the presidential election campaign, the conflict between the Serbs and Croats, and the debate over the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Airing programs on environmental issues caused conflict in a number of communities, and several stations reported that a *Frontline* program on J. Edgar Hoover produced controversy in their area. Other stations indicated that local issues were the source of controversy. Examples of such issues included reports of the police shooting a black motorist, a locally produced program on teenagers and AIDS, and a program on Planned Parenthood. A report on cattle ranching and range wars was a source of controversy in several western states.

### Types of Complaints

As might be expected from the types of programs that were the most frequent sources of controversy, the complaints that stations received most often involved the issue of homosexuality. Many of the viewers that complained felt that the controversial programs promoted gay and lesbian lifestyles, while others felt that the topic was one that should not be on the air. The general tenor of these complaints was that for the most part the public does not want to hear about homosexuality and that this topic should not be addressed in public programming.

While complaints about gay and lesbian issues were the dominant source of controversy, a number of other complaints were received by several stations. Concerns about graphic language and profanity were the next most commonly voiced complaints, followed by objections to the presentation of racial issues, a perceived anti-Semitic tone in some programming, and the presentation of nudity. Another more general type of complaint that was noted frequently was a bias in programming or the feeling that only one side of an issue was presented. When a directional bias was noted in these complaints, it was predominantly liberal, although several stations were accused of having a conservative bias.

Another general complaint concerned the airing of controversial topics. The typical concern of these viewers or listeners was the station should not present such topics and that such material should not be on the air. While a number of these complaints were related to the presentation of homosexuality, particularly *Tongues Untied*, a more general concern was expressed about the presentation of controversial material on public radio and television stations.

Other complaints received were mentioned by fewer respondents or were more localized in content. These included concerns about bias against Christian values, programming that is not family oriented, and a bias against farmers and ranchers in the cattle industry.

Finally, while most of the complaints received were in reaction to a program that had been aired, a number of stations received complaints over their failure to air a program. These complaints generally involved claims of censorship and the feeling that such programs should be available for individuals to make their own decision to watch or not. The balance between the complaints received if a controversial program is aired and the claims of censorship if it is not is an obvious factor that must be considered in programming decisions.

### Dealing with Controversy

For the most part, stations that receive complaints arising from the presentation of controversial material follow a standard operating procedure in dealing with them. This involves talking with people who call to complain and attempting to explain to them the decision to air, often in terms of the station's mission, its desire to provide balance, or its role in providing a forum for debate on public issues, or writing a letter in response to those who write to complain about such programming.

Beyond these standard responses, individual stations employ a variety of approaches in dealing with controversies. One strategy includes inviting those who express concerns to become involved with the station, such as by helping to review programs or serving on an advisory board. Other stations provide an opportunity for those with opposing views to present them on the air. Another method for dealing with controversy is through publicity, either through stories or op-ed pieces in the newspaper, or by reading a statement on the air that addresses the concerns raised. Several stations met with community leaders or with members of the groups involved in the controversy in an effort to defuse controversy, while one station set up a call-in telephone poll to allow the audience to vote on whether or not to air the program. In several cases the complaints led stations to air the program at a later hour, to discontinue running the show, and in one case to change in the station's policy to make it more difficult for similar programs to be aired in the future.

### Editorials and Commentary

Another question of interest in this survey concerned the extent to which public radio and television stations ran commentary and editorials. Less than 4 percent of respondents indicated that their station ran editorials, and each case was either a radio station or a situation in which the respondent was responsible for both a radio and television station.

Although few stations run editorials, about half run some type of commentary. Roughly 19 percent reported running local commentary, 15 percent run only network commentary, and 16 percent run both local and network commentary. A higher percentage of radio stations (59 percent) than television stations (32 percent) reported running commentary, and radio stations were particularly more likely to run commentary provided by a network.

Stations Running Commentary

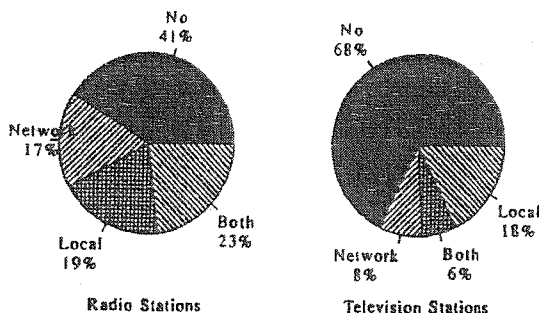


Figure 3

Decisions about airing editorials or commentaries did not seem to present much of a problem for those stations that use such materials. Among those stations that air network commentary, the general sentiment was that commentaries were part of the network programming and if it was acceptable to the network, then the station did little in terms of screening or reviewing such material. A similar attitude was evident with regard to local commentary. While several stations mentioned factors such as importance to the community or consistency with their mission statement as considerations in deciding whether to air editorials or commentary, for the most part the sentiment expressed was that if the material was not slanderous, it was suitable to be aired. A number of

stations indicated that their regular programming included slots specifically for commentary, that requests to provide commentary were seldom refused, and that they encouraged interested parties to provide the opposing side of issues.

### Ensuring Diversity

An additional area of concern in this study was the means that stations used to ensure that their programs reflected public broadcasting standards on considerations such as diversity and balance.

On rare occasions, a station reported using a quota system in which an effort was made to complement shows that touched on controversial issues to ensure that balance was achieved.

In most instances, however, ensuring diversity and balance were seen to be a part of the normal process of making program decisions. Station programming is reviewed, usually by the general manager or program director, to determine that programming is balanced, and staff often provide suggestions for improving diversity. A frequent comment of those interviewed was that the station tried to balance any "issue" or controversial programs with programs that presented an opposing viewpoint. Another frequently voiced sentiment was that stations depended on network programming to provide diversity and balance.

In addition to the general sense of balance that is provided from reviews by the general manager or program director or from staff input, some stations use more specific means for ensuring diversity and balance. Some rely on audience research as well as feedback from listeners and viewers, while others seek assistance from a community advisory board.

There were also cases in which the station tried deliberately not to promote diversity. Such stations were those whose mission was to serve a specialized population (e.g., an Indian tribe or Eskimos), and to present a particular viewpoint on issues. In such cases, promoting diversity was opposed to rather than consistent with the mission of the station.

### Guidelines

As part of this interview, respondents were also asked if there were any situations during the past three years in which having a set of programming

guidelines or the lack of such guidelines played a significant role. Approximately 40 percent of these stations indicated that the existence of such guidelines--or the lack thereof--had played a significant role.

While the experiences that stations reported in most cases reflected unique circumstances, the general sense provided by these responses is that the presence of programming guidelines made decisionmaking easier for those stations that had them, while those stations that did not felt that the existence of such guidelines may have enabled them to avoid problems.

Without going into great detail, examples of responses from several stations that had such guidelines provide a sense of the variety of circumstances in which they have been found useful. In one case, a station based its decision not to air *Tongues Untied* on the basis that it did not meet community standards as described in its programming guidelines. Another station pointed to its policy of not accepting underwriting from groups that promote causes as a means of refusing support from a controversial group. In this instance, other underwriters had threatened to withdraw their support if the controversial group in question became associated with the program. In another, an employee disregarded the station's policy on language and was fired. The airing of *Tongues Untied* forced another station to rethink why it aired controversial programs, and as a result, the standards used by the station were updated. As summarized by one station manager, "You can't run a station effectively without standards."

On the other hand, stations that did not have guidelines indicated that such standards would have been useful in a variety of situations. In one instance, a station was required to seek assistance from its legal department before making an announcement of a person's death and reward for capture of the murderer. In another, the lack of guidelines made it difficult for the station to deal with a threat from an individual who was not given an opportunity to present his views on the air. Several respondents indicated that guidelines would be helpful in making decisions about whether or not to air a program. In this context, *Tongues Untied* was once again mentioned by several respondents who felt that the decision whether to air the program would have been made easier by a set of guidelines.

## General Evaluations

A final purpose of this survey was to provide stations an opportunity to relate the types of comments that they receive overall and to indicate which programs the stations air receive generally positive comments. From the responses, the conclusion is that managers of public radio or television stations believe that their audiences have a generally positive view of them.

A large majority of stations reported that most of the comments they receive from their viewers or listeners were positive. Both network programs and those produced locally received positive comments. Network shows that received a large number of positive mentions across regions of the country included *Morning Edition*, *All Things Considered*, and *Car Talk* for radio stations, and the *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*, *Masterpiece Theatre*, *Bill Moyers*, and *National Geographic* for television.

Content-based programming, such as children's shows, cooking shows, "how-to" programs, jazz programs, and programs dealing with health or medical issues were also frequently mentioned. In addition, local programming, including local cultural programs, historical programs, and news and public affairs received a number of favorable comments, as did several special programs, such as David Frost's interview with Billy Graham and a *Frontline* program on the life of J. Edgar Hoover. In sum, the initial reaction of many respondents was that this question was too difficult to answer, because they felt all their stations' programming was received positively by the audience.

While the specific positive comments reported varied widely across stations, they tended to fall into several broad types. These included being informative, providing different points of view, interesting subject matter, the range and diversity of topics, educational value of programs, and the fact that programs are entertaining.

Those stations that reported negative or mixed reactions from their audience were generally criticized for being liberal because of some programming change or because of the types or mix of programs aired by the station. Unfavorable reactions, however, were few. As one station manager put it, "Those that don't like, don't listen."